

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

OMB-01 SSC-01 PC-01 AID-05 /070 W

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R 050522Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7319

CONFIDENTIAL TANANARIVE 0984

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, PINT, US, MA

SUBJECT: MALAGASY POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

REF: A. TANANARIVE 0934; B. TANANARIVE 0852

SUMMARY: RESTIVENESS OF MALAGASY POLITICAL SCENE HAS INTENSIFIED IN PAST FEW DAYS AMID DISQUIETUDE GENERATED BY INCREASING PUBLIC DISSATISFACTION WITH CONDUCT OF TRIAL OF ALLEGED ASSASSINS AND GROWING SPECULATION THAT COMMANDER RATSIRAKA MAY SOON REPLACE GENERAL ANDRIAMAHAZO AS HEAD OF GOVERNMENT.  
END SUMMARY.

1. MILITARY TRIBUNAL'S CONDUCT OF TRIAL OF DEFENDENTS ACCUSED OF FOMENTING REBELLION AND KILLING COLONEL RATSIMANDRAVA IS INCREASINGLY SUBJECT OF ABUSE BY INFORMED MALAGASY. IN ADDITION TO HAVING SUFFERED RESIGNATION OF SENIOR JUDGE (SEE REF A) WHEN TRIAL NEARLY OVER, TRIBUNAL HAS DELAYED UNTIL NOW PRESENTATION OF OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE, E.G. MEDICAL REPORTS, WHICH HAS BELATEDLY REVEALED GAPS IN INVESTIGATION AND RAISED NEW QUESTIONS. ALSO, TRIBUNAL HAS ALREADY GRANTED AMNESTY TO LARGE NUMBER OF DEFENDENTS, DESPITE FACT TRIAL NOT COMPLETED. NEW SUSPICIONS HAVE BEEN AROUSED BY CONTROVERSY CAUSED BY REFUSAL OF TWO MILITARY DIRECTORY MEMBERS TO TESTIFY ON PROCEDURAL GROUNDS. LOCAL LAWYERS FOLLOWING TRIAL SEE LITTLE LEGAL BASIS FOR CONVICTION OF DEFENDENTS BASED  
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ON EVIDENCE PRESENTED SO FAR. WHILE TRIAL HAS CONSISTENTLY

POSED DIFFICULT PROBLEMS FOR GOMR, THOSE PROBLEMS NOW  
DECIDEDLY WORSE.

2. FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER COMMANDER DIDIER RATSIRAKA CONTINUES TO COMMAND PRESS AND PUBLIC ATTENTION, LARGELY DUE TO HIS OWN BEHIND-THE-SCENES EFFORTS. RATSIRAKA FOLLOWERS HAVE PRESSED VARIOUS JOURNALISTS TO CARRY ITEMS FAVORABLE TO RATSIRAKA. FOR EXAMPLE, MAD MATIN ON JUNE 4 CARRIED FRONT-PAGE PHOTO OF RATSIRAKA TAKEN TWO YEARS AGO SIGNING AGREEMENT WITH FRENCH ON DEPARTURE OF FRENCH MILITARY. MORE CURRENTLY, FRONT-PAGE COVERAGE WAS ALSO ACCORDED RATSIRAKA'S RETURN FROM PARIS ON MAY 27 WHEN HE WAS MET BY AN UNUSUALLY HEAVY SECURITY ESCORT AT AIRPORT WHICH GENERATED CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION CONCERNING HIS GROWING IMPORTANCE. ALSO WELL-PUBLICIZED WERE CALLS ON RATSIRAKA BY FRENCH AND NORTH KOREAN AMBASSADORS. AS INDICATED IN REFTEL B, EMBASSY BELIEVES GENERAL ANDRIAMAHAZO WILLING TO STEP ASIDE IN FAVOR OF RATSIRAKA AND LATTER APPEARS TO BE MAKING HIS PREPARATIONS TO TAKE OVER GOVERNMENT WITH BROAD-BASED SUPPORT AND WITHOUT VIOLENCE. RATSIRAKA APPEARS TO BE ACTIVELY ENCOURAGING SPECULATION ABOUT HIS TAKING POWER IN ORDER TO DAMPEN ANY SHOCK WHEN IT ACTUALLY HAPPENS. UNLIKE FRENCH OBSERVERS, HOWEVER, EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT SOME OPPOSITION TO IMMEDIATE RATSIRAKA TAKEOVER STILL EXISTS IN MILITARY DIRECTORY, BUT EMBASSY DOES AGREE WITH FRENCH THAT RATSIRAKA COULD BECOME NEW HEAD OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT IN NEAR FUTURE.

3. MORE DETAILED POLITICAL EVALUATION WILL BE FORWARDED BY AIRGRAM IN NEXT CLASSIFIED POUCH.  
ELFERS

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## Message Attributes

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